

Walker Insurance Agency, Inc.
810 Dutch Square Blvd
Columbia, SC 29210

Walker Insurance Agency, a commercial property and casualty insurance agency, is a husband- and wife-owned company whose focus on the logging and foresting industries continues a family tradition of involvement in the timber business. With support from Business Carolina and the SBA, Thomas Cathcart was able to transform his business proposal into his own business. Today, Cathcart is president of Walker Insurance, his wife Lisa is co-owner and chief financial officer, his father is the company's safety and the loss control representative, and his brother-in-law is an insurance agent.

After working for one of the Southeast's largest insurers of the logging and forestry industries, Davis Garvin – a job that took him through the southeastern states, Cathcart took a management position in his family's timber business in Winnsboro. Although he had to dissolve the company following Hurricane Hugo, his experience inspired a continuing interest in logging insurance. He returned to the insurance industry, accepting a position at Walker Insurance Agency in 1995.

After 10 years with Walker, Cathcart knew it was time to put his "perpetuation plan into action" and take the lead as the agency's new owner. According to Cathcart, Business Carolina and the SBA were the only institutions to have "an open mind to review our (business) proposal." Aided by Business Carolina loan officer Larry Jones, he obtained the necessary funds through the help of an SBA 7(a) loan, processed by Lois Johnson, Lender Relations Officer for the S.C. District Office. On February 1, 2005, Cathcart purchased the corporate stock of Walker Insurance Agency, and he and his wife assumed ownership.

Walker Insurance Agency is one of only three insurance agencies in South Carolina to provide logging and forestry insurance. According to the notes from the New Hampshire Needs Assessment for the Forestry Industry, a conference held Sept. 26, 2003, one of the top three issues in the forest industry was insurance. With their own experience in the forestry industry, Cathcart and his family had the prescience to continue a valuable and in-demand service through taking over Walker Insurance Agency.